

APPENDIX N

PUBLIC HOUSING STRATEGY AND PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENT INITIATIVES



The Seattle Housing Authority is a public body corporate and politic established by the State of Washington in 1939, is governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners, two of whom must be SHA residents. Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and ratified by the Seattle City Council. The Board of Commissioners is responsible for approving the annual budget for SHA and for setting policy. The Executive Director is appointed by and reports to the Board.

The *Seattle Housing Authority (SHA)*, the largest low-income housing provider in the state, owns and operates approximately 5,400 units of federally-funded public housing, about 1,000 units of locally-funded housing under the Seattle Senior Housing Program and over 800 units of other affordable housing and administers over 7,800 Housing Choice Vouchers. Over 23,000 low-income people benefit from these programs.

The mission of the Seattle Housing Authority is to *enhance the Seattle community by creating and sustaining decent, safe and affordable living environments that foster stability and self-sufficiency for people with low incomes.*

Goals and objectives are encompassed in these guiding principles developed by the Board of Commissioners:

- ▶ Expand the availability of housing for low-income people.
- ▶ Embrace the principles of excellent customer service in the administration of SHA programs.
- ▶ Ensure the long-term viability of SHA's housing stock.
- ▶ Maximize efficiency in delivering maintenance and management services.
- ▶ Implement strategies that will reduce dependency on federal funding.
- ▶ Be positioned to respond effectively and responsibly to change.
- ▶ Contribute to building strong neighborhoods in Seattle.
- ▶ Assist SHA families in achieving their personal goals.
- ▶ Build, support and respect an excellent SHA work force.
- ▶ Exercise fiscal soundness in the pursuit of SHA programs and activities.

SHA is an independent public owner and developer of subsidized housing with a variety of relationships to the City of Seattle.

- ▶ The Office of Housing, Human Services Department and SHA work closely together to coordinate housing development and community and supportive services programs.
- ▶ SHA is an active participant in the City of Seattle interdepartmental team that develops the Consolidated Plan.
- ▶ SHA employees participate in a joint benefits program with the City.
- ▶ The City provides public services to SHA-owned properties such as police, fire and utilities, except where SHA elects to provide services independently (e.g., refuse collection and recycling).
- ▶ The City of Seattle may play a variety of roles in SHA demolition or redevelopment projects. Each project is unique. In past and current projects, the City has issued land use and building permits, provided funding to SHA, and partnered with SHA in community and supportive services provision, funding of non-profit-owned replacement housing, and development of community facilities. SHA and City-owned utilities are working closely together to design and implement energy and resource conservation measures in SHA housing. SHA and the Office of Housing are working closely together to bring SHA housing resources to housing developed under the Housing Levy.
- ▶ Hiring and procurement decisions are made by SHA; no City oversight is required.
- ▶ The City has no oversight of SHA decisions to dispose of properties, except for properties funded with City bond or levy proceeds.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has recognized SHA as one of the highest performing housing authorities in the country. As a result, SHA has been selected to participate in the Moving-to-Work (MTW) Demonstration Program, which gives SHA the freedom to explore effective new ways of delivering services tailored to Seattle's needs.

SHA produces an annual plan, including a capital plan, to meet HUD's requirements for housing authorities with an MTW designation. The current annual plan can be found at <http://www.seattlehousing.org/Development/assetman>. SHA's fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30.

Public Housing Strategies

Using its MTW flexibility, SHA has organized its housing stock into portfolios of properties with similar physical and social characteristics and financial requirements. Strategies for addressing revitalization and restoration needs, improving management and operations and the quality of the living environment are structured to take into account the specific needs of each portfolio and are summarized below.

Public Housing portfolios:

- ▶ NewHolly
- ▶ Rainier Vista
- ▶ High Point
- ▶ Yesler Terrace
- ▶ Public Housing Highrises North
- ▶ Public Housing Highrises South
- ▶ Scattered Sites

NewHolly, Rainier Vista and High Point: Revitalization through HOPE VI

SHA has successfully used HOPE VI funding to revitalize public housing and improve management and the quality of life for residents in several communities. Federal HOPE VI grants are bringing over \$118 million to Seattle to revitalize three public housing portfolios: NewHolly, Rainier Vista, in southeast Seattle's Rainier Valley, and High Point in West Seattle.

- ▶ **NewHolly:** The transformation of the 100+-acre Holly Park from 871 units of World War II era public housing to the new, mixed-income community of NewHolly is in its third and final phase. NewHolly has won numerous awards and recognition for community building, design, and sustainable building practices and growth management. The first and second phases of rental housing, 385 units, are complete and occupied. The last phase of rental housing will be complete in FY 2005. A 318-unit elder village, built in partnership with the Providence Health Systems and Retirement Housing Foundation, opened in early 2002. 199 available for-sale homes have sold out and are occupied. SHA is negotiating with builders to complete the for-sale housing. The Neighborhood Campus, consisting of a branch of the Seattle Public Library, South Seattle Community College, a teen center, extensive child care facilities and other community and supportive services facilities, opened in November 1999. The third phase of NewHolly redevelopment, Othello Station, SHA will include a mixed use component with International Community Health Services and other non-residential uses at the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and South Othello Street, adjacent to the Sound Transit Othello Link Light Rail station.
- ▶ **Rainier Vista.** The current redevelopment program of this 65-acre community calls for just over 1,000 units of mixed-income and mixed-tenure housing, new community facilities and open space, in place of 481 units of World War II-era housing in the Rainier Valley. Other redevelopment program elements include: Providence Health Systems will complete construction of 78 units of low-income housing for seniors, funded by a Section 202 grant. Housing Resources Group and AIDS Housing of Washington will begin construction of 50 units of rental housing, including 22 units of housing for people with disabilities funded through Section 811 and 14 Rainier Vista replacement units, and 14 units of workforce housing. Neighborhood House is building a 10,000 square foot community center with Head Start classrooms. Approximately 40 percent of the for sale units built at Rainier Vista will be affordable to buyers with incomes below

80 percent of median income. A small amount of commercial space for neighborhood-scale retail will be developed at the south end of the property, which is adjacent to Sound Transit's Edmonds-Columbia City Link Light Rail Station.

- ▶ **High Point:** SHA's third large World War II era public housing complex will be completely rebuilt into a mixed-income, mixed-use community. The redevelopment program calls for 1,600 units of housing in place of 716 public housing units on 120 acres: 350 public housing units, 250 workforce affordable rental units; 116 units for very low income seniors; 149 market rate units for seniors; 80 affordable home ownership units, and 655 market rate for sale homes. The redevelopment plan features sustainable building practices, including natural storm water management, and homes that meet Built Green standards.

A fourth HOPE VI grant of \$17 million for Roxbury House and Village, funded the comprehensive rehabilitation of one of 28 public housing highrises and the redesign and rebuilding of one of three family villages, which are included in the high-rise portfolios.

- ▶ **Roxbury House and Village revitalization** is complete, including off-site replacement housing. On the site of the former Roxbury Village, the Lutheran Alliance to Create Housing (LATCH) has developed 45 units of mutual housing in Longfellow and Westwood Courts. Fifteen of the units are affordable to families earning less than 30% of the area median income (public housing units), with the remainder affordable to households earning between 30%-50% of median income. Roxbury House has been renamed Westwood Heights and designated for near low-income elderly/near elderly residents.

SHA has made a commitment to the citizens of Seattle for full one-for-one replacement of all very low-income rental units as a result of these HOPE VI grants. The Roxbury Replacement program is complete and all the other replacement housing programs are well underway. With this commitment, SHA has successfully tackled one of the most controversial issues plaguing HOPE VI around the country.

Public Housing Highrises, North and South

The high-rise portfolios have about 3,000 units serving primarily extremely-low-income disabled and elderly households. SHA is embarking on an ambitious \$28 million effort to renovate 17 of 28 public housing highrises over the next five years to address aging building systems. Bonds will be issued, to be paid back using part of SHA's capital grant for public housing from HUD over the next twenty years. Renovation will include exterior repairs, mechanical system replacement and common area improvements to increase livability. SHA is also designating highrises to meet specific community needs. Two highrises have been formally designated with HUD approval for elderly residents: Westwood Heights (the old Roxbury House), renovated through a HOPE VI grant, and Ballard House, which will be included in the upcoming renovation program. In addition, SHA has designated Tri-Court as a smoke-free environment and will likely choose a second building for such a designation.

Yesler Terrace

The SHA Board of Commissioners has made the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace a priority for the next ten years. With the ongoing withdrawal of federal support for low-income housing, the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace is a key component in SHA's strategy to continue to serve low-income Seattle residents. In FY 2005, SHA will begin planning the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. The planning process will likely take two-three years, possibly longer. The first step will be to create a broad vision for the new neighborhood, with help of residents, immediate neighbors and the wider

community. Like the other community revitalizations, Yesler Terrace is anticipated to be a mixed-income community. On a one-for-one basis, every unit at Yesler Terrace will be replaced in Seattle; at least a portion of the Yesler replacement units will be built at the current site. Redevelopment will most likely be accomplished over an extended period in small stages – a block or two at a time over several years. Many Yesler residents may be able to stay on site during the process.

Scattered Sites

With 221 single-family homes scattered throughout the city and another 164 units in duplex and triplex structures, this 787-unit portfolio is SHA's most expensive to manage and maintain. Over the next several years, SHA plans to sell up to 200 scattered site units and replace them with units that are more efficient to manage and maintain and better located to meet resident needs. This is part of a multi-pronged strategy to reducing dependence on declining public housing operating and capital subsidies. The sales will also generate revenue to help SHA meet other replacement housing commitments without tapping into local or state subsidy funds. First priority for purchase will be given to the existing residents of the affected units. Non-profit housing developers presenting full price offers will be given priority for purchase over others submitting offers with comparable terms and conditions.

SHA will strive to replace scattered sites in small batches as units are sold, so that the total number of units available remains fairly stable. Replacement units will be located in the same, non-poverty neighborhoods throughout Seattle, including the north end and West Seattle. SHA will look for units near transit, with easy access to shopping, parks, schools and neighborhood services. The low-density, "scattered" nature of the program will be preserved. Units will blend seamlessly into surrounding neighborhoods. Overall, there will be fewer single-family houses, but the portfolio will continue to serve families with children; all replacement units will have two or more bedrooms.

Housing Choice Voucher Program

SHA administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) in Seattle, verifying participant eligibility, working with landlords to house voucher holders and inspecting units to ensure that they meet Housing Quality Standards. Between 1999 and 2004, Seattle area low-income households benefited from unprecedented increases in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. In that time, SHA saw its voucher supply increase from about 4,500 to over 7,500 vouchers, or \$60 million in rental subsidies per year. Approximately 6,000 vouchers benefit Seattle residents, with the balance benefiting families who have moved out of the city with an SHA voucher.

Under MTW, SHA is using a portion of its voucher supply strategically to help meet Seattle's high priority housing goals. Through project-basing of vouchers in mixed income or special needs housing throughout the city, SHA is:

- ▶ Meeting HOPE VI replacement housing goals; and
- ▶ Supporting City of Seattle housing initiatives including Sound Families (transitional housing for homeless households) and providing operating subsidy for new units built with local Housing Levy funds, allowing these funds to be used for housing production.

Congressional appropriations and recent HUD actions have stopped the supply of new vouchers and are threatening the funding levels that allow SHA to serve so many households.

Public Housing Resident Initiatives

Residents are encouraged to become involved in SHA policy making and the management of their communities in a variety of ways:

- ▶ SHA Community Builders work with interested residents in the highrises to form and sustain duly-elected resident councils to work with management on issues of common interest.
- ▶ Duly-elected councils may send representatives to the Joint Policy Advisory Committee, with whom SHA regularly consults on major policy issues.
- ▶ SHA strives to hire capable residents as resident managers, assistant resident managers and back-up resident managers.
- ▶ The management model for the HOPE VI communities relies on residents working in the management office as property management assistants.
- ▶ The annual agency plan and budget process includes public involvement. Residents are encouraged to comment either in writing or by attending the public hearing.

Homeownership is an important component of SHA's HOPE VI efforts. At NewHolly, 100 homes are being offered for sale to households whose incomes are below 80% of area median income, including public housing residents. Forty percent of the home ownership units at Rainier Vista will be affordable to households with incomes at or below 80 percent of area median income, targeting former public housing residents who have achieved stable employment through Jobs Plus' comprehensive, coordinated community and supportive services. The preliminary High Point redevelopment program calls for 80 affordable homeownership units.

Other homeownership activities include:

- ▶ SHA is engaged in a Section 8 home ownership pilot program with the King County Housing Authority, under which up to 30 households will be able to purchase homes.
- ▶ Using MTW flexibility, SHA has maintained enrollment in the Family Self-Sufficiency program, rather than allowing it to shrink by attrition.
- ▶ SHA's FSS program has set a goal of helping about 20 participant households per year move into home ownership.

Where funding permits, these various homeownership programs include counseling and training to prepare low-income households for homeownership.

Community and supportive services focus on helping all residents achieve their maximum level of self-sufficiency. For some elderly residents, this may mean helping them remain in an independent living situation as long as possible with chore services. Many residents with disabilities find that case management services can help them sustain their housing. For households with the capacity to find and keep employment, career centers help with job readiness training, job referrals and other adjustments individuals and families must make when they move from dependence on government assistance to self-sufficiency. SHA regularly conducts assessments of resident's services needs, and partners with other agencies to try to meet expressed services needs.

SHA also supports computer labs in several communities, Westwood Heights, NewHolly, Rainier Vista, High Point, Yesler Terrace and Center Park, to help low-income residents bridge the digital divide. The STAR Center at Center Park is particularly noteworthy, in that it uses state-of-the-art assistive technology and skilled volunteers to provide individuals with disabilities computer literacy and access to the Internet.